

# UPSTAIRS BULLETIN

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Quote from "WHATEVER BECAME OF SIN?" by  
Dr. Karl Menninger.

"For we are not all told the same things; versions differ; actions differ. All rights and wrongs do not seem to be quite the same. For most of us, they were identified for us in owd and deed very early. For me, wrong was basically what my Mother and Father taught me that one should not do, or at least what I should not do.

Later, the general soundness and authority of my parent's convictions were increasingly confirmed in my experience by social attitudes generally and I gradually took over in my conscience the responsibility of judgement. In the light of new knowledge, I made some minor modifications and corrections in the code. My teachers and schoolmates seemed generally not precisely or totally, to share my views or rather my impressions of other's views, and I borrowed a few of theirs. And so it has continued through life. As I have grown older, I have increasingly confirmed or rejected parts of the code in the light of experience and reason.

This understanding of good and evil, or right or wrong, became correlated in my mind with other abstract polarities such as love-hate, light-darkness, construction-destruction, social-antisocial, success-failure. The Judeo-Christian tradition had its standards of good and evil and I learned them first. Later I learned others. In various cubbyholes in my mind are variations and elaborations, but the basic distinctions of my Mother and my Father remain in my conscience codebook."

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## HISTORY OF THE STONE CAMRYN SCHOOL.

The Stone Camryn School of Ballet began in the loop in the spring of 1941 and operated in the Stevens Building on State Street. Prior to that time both Bentley Stone and Walter Camryn, taught regularly, while dancing in the Chicago Civic Opera Company in various schools in Oak Park, Berwyn, Riverside, Cicero, Hinsdale and in the loop. Out of those early years of teaching came John Krizan who became world famous dancing in the American Ballet Theatre. David Nillo, now a choreographer also studied in Oak Park at this time. Many others came out of these classes but ended up in related fields.

During those eight years of teaching like traveling salesmen from suburb to suburb they were restricted in their teaching by the policies of those schools. Most of their later ideas on teaching were formed and clarified at this time. All of those suburban schools were of the type - "a little bit of everything and not enough of anything". If they were to continue in the teaching field (because of the depression they had to) it was imperative that a break be made. So with about twenty pupils they invaded the loop on a permanent basis, cutting their bridges behind them.

They began by sharing a studio with Margot Koche in the Stevens Building taking over the Helen Kurneker studio. Classes began to grow gradually drawing more from professionals. Both teachers continued to dance and choreograph professionally with one or the other always in the school to teach the classes. During this period the classes were very mixed with professionals like Eddie Noll, Byron Kaye, Jackie Warner, Estelle Sloan, Bill Gary, Terry Rudolph, Lynne O'Neill and in with the Sheila and Bill Reillys. In the younger set at that time were Dorothy Hill, Marie Guerrere, Jean Dovell, Ruth Ann Koesun and Louis Yetter.



On the eve of Pearl Harbor they were riding high with Mr. Stone dancing with Ruth Page in the Rainbow Room at Radio City in New York and Mr. Camryn was in the middle of a fourteen week engagement at the Chez Paree dancing only the mid-night show.

There was then a time out for military service with Mr. Stone serving 4-1/2 years in the air corps and Mr. Camryn a year in the Medical Corps. There was an effort made by Ruth Page, Agnes DeMille and Sona Osato to continue the classes but eventually all the younger students were referred to Edna L. Baum.

In 1943 Mr. Camryn was discharged from service to work in a defense plant and at this time the school was reactivated. A move was made to the Grand Theatre Building on Clark Street where the school functioned from the fall of 1944 to 1950. They became very sentimental about this old place because of its associations with the past. The Dighilev Ballet had danced here with Bolm, Nijinsky and Lopoukhova in 1910. Later stars like George M. Cohan, Ethel Waters, and Marilyn Miller had also appeared on its stage. The studio there was not very "grand" at the Grand, in fact it was rather small with a post in the middle but it tied them over through a bad period. One of the many wars was in progress and the building could furnish no heat; so everyone wore all the wool they could put on for classes. The Grand was next door to the Erlanger Theatre where "Oklahoma" was playing so they had the pleasure of having Dania Krupska, Sonia Wojcikowska, Genze De Lappe and others in the classes. During the run of that show 14 dancers from the school were placed in the show, among them James Jamieson, who soon headed the ballet and now successfully runs his own school in Wilmington, Delaware.

At this time the school maintained a good rapport with the American Ballet Theatre and Ruth Ann Koesun from the school was beginning to rise in that company as a star. Other Stone Camryn dancers to join in rapid order were Jean Dovell, Kelly Brown (now with his own school in Phoenix, Arizona), Joan Ehemann, Audre Dechmann and Darrell Notara. Later on Karen Krych and Naomi Sorkin went into the company, all of which became principals in the company.

Both Mr. Stone and Mr. Camryn had an excellent background in their own training and study of classical ballet. Mr. Stone was a student of Margaret Severn, Luigi Albertieri, Laurent Novikoff, Nicolas Legat and Marie Rambert. Mr. Camryn was a student of Alexandra Maximova, Adolph Bolm, Veschlav Swoboda and Laurent Novikoff. Both have worked with other famous teachers and choreographers during their professional years, among them Michael Fokine. Together they are a healthy combination of the Italian and Russian schools of ballet. Now and then they have had guest teachers; among them Margaret Craske, Mary Skeaping, Mia Slavenska, Gertrude Jory, Inga Weiss and Nana Goldner.

While they have delved into all the modern approaches to dance and have taken an active part in it, for training purposes they remained close to the traditional approach. The school is devoted entirely to the teaching of Classical and Character dance, combining the best elements of the Russian and Italian techniques and with the thought that the pupil is being trained for the contemporary theatre. Classes are designed to bring the mind into action developing reason and logic towards movement ideas in the theatre. It is no doubt this approach that the school has produced so many fine teachers in the past; as many seem to become teachers as go into the theatre.

Mr. Stone had met Hassard Short in New York and he was complaining that he could not find boys who were 17 years of age and were at the same time good dancers. He was about to produce "Seventeen" as a musical in New York. Mr. Stone told him that the school had some, so Mr. Short agreed to try them. Three boys were prepared with a dance and a song for the audition and left for New York. At the end of the audition Mr. Short was on the phone and said they would be engaged; did the school have any more? The boys were John Sharpe, Bill Reilly and James Moore. Later Darrell Notara joined the group. Four out of six used in the show from the school. The show opened June 21st, 1951 with Dania Krupska as the choreographer. The fact that the boys were not Equity members caused a stir in New York but somehow Mr. Short got around it.

In the fall of 1950 the school moved into much larger quarters, its present



location at 185 West Madison Street, occupying two floors. The third floor is the large classroom and the second has the offices, dressing rooms and waiting rooms. In 1953 the school was incorporated as a not for profit corporation because of a law passed by the state attempting to control dancing schools as a trade school. Some sort of law that would require a high standard of training might be welcome but this law was not that. No dance person was represented on the board which was made up of nursing schools, ceramic, auto driving and modeling. Stone Camryn was singled out as a test case in an attempt to enforce the law. The only dance school to support Stone Camryn's plight was Edna McRae; all others receded into the background. The school's lawyer incorporated the school and slapped a counter suit against the state saying that it was unconstitutional. The case went on in the courts for about ten years and was eventually dropped by the State.

At about the time of moving to 185 Stone was rehearsing in New York for "Ballet Americans" to open in Paris, France. He was an associate Director along with Ruth Page and Jose Limon. Naturally some SC dancers were in that company and they were James Moore, William Maloney, Dorothy Hill, Joseph Kaminski, Janet Campbell, Harold Borin and Kenneth MacKenzie.

As much as Mr. Camryn enjoyed the dance engagements the school demanded more and more of his time, and as Mr. Stone was away considerably on the Page-Stone tours which played the east and west coasts almost yearly from 1939 through 1950. The three previous years he had toured in Duo concerts with Page.

During the Page-Stone years the company used many dancers from the school but when Stone finally severed relations and only made occasional appearances to partner Marjorie Tallchief, Sonia Arova and Melissa Hayden there was less incentive for them to stay in her International Ballet Company. That company had many of the school's best who only stayed a year or so to leave where there was more chance to grow. The complaint was that the school only trained soloists not good corp de ballet.

During the fall of 1952 there was a Stone Camryn Ballet Concert tour covering eight states - North and South Dakota, Wyoming, Montana, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa and Illinois... all in two months time. That company consisted of Walter Camryn, Joan Ehemann, Barbara De Feo, Donna Roknik, and Patrick Heim with Neal Kayan at the piano. The company danced a two hour program every night in a different town. The programs were highly successful pioneering in towns that rarely had ballet programs. During August of 1954 there was another tour with a much larger group starting at Purdue University and playing the Chataqua Circuit through Ohio and Indiana. This time with Ruth Gordon at the piano. Most of these programs were for religious revival meetings with audiences up to six thousand people. Eventually the giving of programs had to simmer down to local ones and more especially those yearly festivals at the charming old St. Alphonsus Theatre on Chicago's northside. These programs using as many as 45 dancers augmented with some of the school's better known alumni.

The real success of any school is in its training of dancers that are able to make the grade in the big world, whether it is in ballet, musicals or as teachers and choreographers. The school's annual programs have been a great testing ground for more talented ones. Since 1953 the programs have become an event that many people look forward to and they are an important feature of the school. Each year they are a greater challenge because of the constant loss of the older ones to New York, Europe and Colleges. Enough time has passed to be able to see the success of some of the more recent ones. Probably the most startling success is John Neumeier who was in programs from 1958 to 1962. Since that time Karen Krych, Alexis Hoff, Truman Finney, Dolores Lipinski, Judy Svalander, Karen Tims, Dean and Bill Badolato, Lauren Rouse and Jorene Holes have made strides.

Stone Camryn dancers as a rule are very adaptable to the opportunity of the moment. Sometimes this is good - sometimes not so good - depending on what the dancer chooses to do. The School is impressed



and pleased with the successes of John Sharpe, Patrick Cummings, Charles Bennett John Neumeier and Truman Finney but had hoped for their success as classical dancers; all had a special talent in this direction but opportunity or ambition drove them in another direction. Who is to say, maybe they are better off as they are. Ruth Ann Koesun, Delores Lipinski, Naomi Sorkin and Karen Tims also are excellent classical dancers and each have had some measure of success in that direction.

Since 1941 the musical background of the school, whether it be in the classroom or for performances, has been an important feature in the school. For the classroom the major accompanists have been Virginia Weber Gannon, Madelene Dahlman Hargadon and Hildur Nelson. Lora Aborn has written several original ballets produced by the school - "Reunion", "In My Landscape", "The Lonely Ones" and many incidental dances used in concerts. Norman Curtis contributed another score for "Like a Weeping Willow". Other pianists used in the past have been Milly Domville, Joseph Cory, Marlys Blough, Ruth Gordon, Ted Berg, Neal Kayan and Andrea Kushar. Naturally there were others used for shorter periods.

The school's most faithful assistant was without doubt Sheila Reilly who was in the school for many years until her work at Marquette University required her moving to Milwaukee. Years back the school had the chance to place a teacher as the head of the Ballet Department at the National Music Camp at Interlochen, Michigan and that chance was given to Sheila who had a brilliant success there. For shorter periods other assistants have been William Maloney, Wini Bokor, John Widmer, Steve Primis, Julie Bicking Walder and Elizabeth Wineberg.

Much more can be said about the school but because of limited space some has been either said before or will in the future. The Children's Civic Theatre of Chicago which was sponsored by the Chicago Drama League was a free project to help keep the children off the streets in the summer months. It was extremely important in the growth of the school. Mr. Camryn was Artistic Director and Choreographer from 1941 until its last performance August 2nd, 1948. At that time the project was killed by Mayor Kennelly's effort to cut the city expenses by saving the city a paltry \$1,500 a year. Some 500 children a season bene-

fited by their association with this group each summer. It might be of interest to mention a few names from the program of that last show on August 2nd - William Reilly, Audre Deckmann, Joan Ehemann, Karen Rose, Yvonne Brown, Patricia Klokovic, Dolores Lipinski, Darrell Notara, Patrick Heim, John Sharpe, James Moore and Patrick Cummings. All have done well in the profession.

In what is nearly 50 years of teaching in the area thousands of pupils have gone through this training of uncompromised discipline in dance. Many were from other schools as was Jack and Bud Tygett, Bonnie Mathis, Aron Girard, Alexis Hoff, and Barbara Steele, each spending enough time in the classes to have been influenced by them. By-products in other fields include - Actors, Michael Shannon, and Jay Devlin; Actresses, Janice Rule, Donna Mills, and Judy West; Singers, Mari Lynn Brown and Jonie James; and Teachers galore.